

Guiding Principles Concerning Regional Transit Task Force

As approved with revisions by Council on July 12, 2010

Introduction

King County's Regional Transit Task Force, per Motion No.13189 adopted on March 15, 2010 is charged with the following tasks:

- Concurring with, or proposing changes to, the vision and mission of King County Metro;
- Developing criteria for systematically growing the transit system to achieve the vision;
- Identifying state and federal legislative agenda issues to achieve the vision;
- Recommending strategies for increasing the efficiency of King County Metro; and
- Developing criteria for systematically reducing the transit system should revenues not be available to sustain it.

Early Policy Direction

The Task Force is directed to explore six key service design factors that will ultimately lead to recommendations related to their charge. The City of Bellevue encourages the following consideration for each factor to facilitate long-term comprehensive reform of the King County Metro transit system:

- 1. Productivity and Efficiency.** Metro should create a vision that sets targets for base service levels prioritized first to high performing routes that connect the County's emerging and established centers, then to routes that help relieve congestion, and lastly to routes that provide local service coverage. The Transit Task Force should recommend that Metro identify benchmarks and performance measures to track implementation of the vision over time. Metro should implement a host of cost control measures to reduce overhead, operations, maintenance and capital costs. Specifically, the County should pursue labor agreement modifications over time to control costs and reduce barriers to other forms of service delivery. Metro should also consider operational and capital business practice efficiencies. Considerations should include: expansion of competitive contracting practices, adjustments to layover and scheduled maintenance policies, revision of performance standards and delaying some capital improvements. These and other areas of administrative reforms should advance prior to seeking and implementing new revenue tools.
- 2. Land Use.** Transit service should be prioritized to support county-wide and regional planning policies, with a priority focus on providing higher levels of service for urban centers, high employment centers, high capacity transit connections and infill areas (i.e., Downtown Bellevue, Bel-Red redevelopment area and other transit activity centers including Crossroads, Factoria and Eastgate areas and surrounding East King County cities and their transit activity centers). Metro should coordinate with other transit providers to ensure services are complementary and productive, while minimizing service overlaps. The Task Force should ensure that service expansion and/or reallocation is consistent with VISION 2040's urban centers designation, job/housing growth targets, local Comprehensive Plans and local subarea plans with zoning intended to attract mixed-used density and goals to reduce Green House Gas emissions.
- 3. Financial Sustainability.** The transit system must be financially sustainable, which will require significant operational reform and service delivery innovation. Financial sustainability should be achieved first through an array of cost control measures, exploration of alternative service delivery models and then exploration of new revenue sources to meet and sustain future transit demand. Alternative delivery models for exploration could include contracting out some services to either cities and/or private contractors.
- 4. Geographic Equity.** The County should consider innovative ways to improve geographic distribution of transit service at the lowest cost possible, including consideration to shift resources from low performing local routes to alternative service providers.

5. **Social Equity and Environmental Justice.** The transit system must recognize that there are special populations in the county that are heavily transit dependent, such as seniors, youth, people with low income and those without private transportation. The Task Force should consider innovative methods for assessing needs and serving these populations in a cost effective manner.
6. **Economic Development.** Transit is an important component of growing and sustaining economic development in urban and metropolitan centers. Transit service should support economic development by prioritizing service that connects people with job centers. Moreover, transit should help propel planned mixed-use and compact patterns of developments where transit best performs.

Next Steps

The Task Force should conduct a needs assessment and gap analysis using these factors, develop scenarios that have varying or weighted emphasis, and report out the findings for consideration.